

United States Mint Strikes Benjamin Franklin Commemorative Coins

December 19, 2005

Two New Silver Dollars Celebrate 300th Anniversary of Franklin's Birth

PHILADELPHIA — Benjamin Franklin accomplished so much that the United States Mint is striking two commemorative silver dollars (as authorized by Congress and the President), instead of one, to mark the 300th anniversary of Franklin's birth in 1706. United States Mint Acting Director David A. Lebryk today hosted Delaware Congressman Mike Castle and officials from the Franklin Institute and the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission at the United States Mint at Philadelphia for the ceremonial striking of the two new commemorative coins. The coins may be ordered on January 17th, Franklin's birthday. Surcharges from the sale of these coins are authorized to be paid to the Franklin Institute for the purposes of the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission. Guests at the strike ceremony were also treated to a display of numismatic items relating to Benjamin Franklin.

"Benjamin Franklin was a statesman, scientist, philosopher and patriot, and his life and achievements stand unparalleled in our history," said Acting Director Lebryk. "One of the Republic's most renowned founding fathers, Franklin was also a favorite son of Philadelphia. As a contributor of designs for the Nation's first coins, it is fitting that he rests in Christ Church Burial Ground next to the United States Mint at Philadelphia.

Only Congress may authorize official commemorative coins, and only the United States Mint may produce them. Congressman Castle sponsored the legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives that authorized the two silver dollars. Public Law 108-464, dated December 21, 2004, authorizes the production of two silver dollar designs with a mintage limit of 250,000 coins for each design, limiting the total for the program to 500,000 coins.

"This is a very special day for all who honor Benjamin Franklin and those who are interested in the production of new coins," said Congressman Castle. "I would like to thank the United States Mint and the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Commission for their hard work on this project, which will help serve as an historical reminder of this great man and his place in our country's history. I am extremely pleased that the two commemorative silver dollars, which will mark the 300th anniversary of his birth, allow us to honor both the early and later achievements of Benjamin Franklin.

The first coin, "Scientist," features on its obverse an image of a younger Franklin and recalls the groundbreaking success of his experiments into the nature of electricity in June of 1752. The reverse design reproduces Franklin's famous political cartoon, featuring a severed snake, and is meant to convey Franklin's belief that colonial unity was truly a matter of life and death, entitled "Join, or Die." The second coin in the program, "Founding Father," reflects a more familiar image of Benjamin Franklin, capturing the great patriot and statesman in the autumn of his years. The reverse of the second coin, featuring a 1776 Continental Currency dollar, showcases the contributions made by Franklin to the spirit of early American coinage and currency design.

The United States Mint will offer the Benjamin Franklin Commemorative Coins in both proof and uncirculated condition. For those who place their orders early during the pre-issue period — from January 17 to March 14 — the proof 2006 Benjamin Franklin Silver Dollar will be offered at \$35 and the uncirculated silver dollar for \$33. Shipments of Ben Franklin Silver Dollars are expected to begin near the end of this pre-issue period (March). After March 14, the proof silver dollar will be offered at \$39 and the uncirculated silver dollar for \$35.

A Benjamin Franklin Coin &Chronicles Set may also be ordered beginning January 17. This set, priced at \$65, contains a "Scientist" uncirculated silver dollar; a collection of four newly released stamps from the United States Postal Service; a reproduction of Poor Richard's Almanack from the Government Printing Office; and an intaglio print, executed by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, honoring Franklin's contribution to the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. The Benjamin Franklin coin &Chronicles Set will begin shipping in April 2006, after the official release of the U.S. postage stamps that are included in the set.

The 2006 United States Mint American Legacy Collection™ will offer a "Founding Father" proof silver dollar and proof versions of all 2006–dated circulating coins. This set will also include a proof version of the second commemorative coin program for 2006 — should there be one. The American Legacy Collection will be available later in the year.

Images of both coins issued for the Benjamin Franklin Commemorative Coin Program can be found on [/learn/coin-and-medal-programs/commemorative-coins/benjamin-franklin](#), by clicking on "Commemoratives."

Customers will be able to order the Benjamin Franklin Commemorative Coins beginning January 17, 2006, at 12:00 noon (ET) by using the United States Mint's secure website, www.usmint.gov, or by calling 1-800-USA-MINT (872-6468). Hearing- and speech-impaired customers may order by calling 1-888-321-MINT (6468). A shipping and handling fee of \$4.95 per order will be added to all domestic orders.

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